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L20: Entry 1 of 1   File: USPT   Jul 16, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6421425 B1
TITLE: Automated communications assistant for the sound-impaired

Detailed Description Text (6):
As shown in FIG. 2, the process contemplated by this disclosure is initiated in
step 201 when a sound-impaired person at TTY 101 initiates a TDD call that is
destined for telephone set 122. The TDD call is established according to a two-
phase process. In a first phase, as indicated in step 202, a first connection is
established to TRS platform 104 or more specifically to PBX 105. Upon determining
that the call is a TDD call, PBX 105 transfers the call to processor 107 which
invites the sound-impaired caller to type the telephone number and optionally the
name of the called party. Upon receiving the called party number, processor 107 in
step 203, launches a query to database 109 to retrieve the IP address of the called
party. The aforementioned database search-can be accomplished in many ways,
including accessing an Internet website to find the IP address associated with the
telephone number and/or name provided by the TDD caller. If no IP address can be
found for the called party, as determined in step 204, the call is transferred to
CA position 108 for the call to be completed in a conventional manner, as indicated
in step 205. In a departure from the prior art, the communications assistant may
inform the called party that calls to and from a sound-impaired person can be
completed with complete privacy and at cheaper rates by accessing a particular
website at protocol conversion server 113. Alternatively, VRU 106 may deliver an
announcement to the called party giving such called party the choice of either
using the conventional services of the communications assistant, or accessing the
web site at protocol conversion server 113 to communicate with the TDD caller. The
announcement would include the Universal Resource Locator (URL) of the Internet-TDD
website on the protocol conversion server 113. If the called party elects to
communicate with the TDD caller via the Internet, VRU 106 would transfer the call
to protocol conversion server 113 for further processing.

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